

VA Announces Members of Minority Veterans Advisory Panel

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi has announced the membership of a 19-member panel to advise him on issues affecting minority veterans. WDVA's Assistant



Lourdes E. Alvarado-Ramos

Director Lourdes E. Alvarado-Ramos and Francisco F. Ivarra,

national commander of the American GI Forum, are among those selected for this advisory panel.

The Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans, established by law in 1994, reports annually to the VA secretary with assessments of how well VA's programs and services meet the needs of veterans who are minority group members.

The committee reviews reports and studies relating to minority veterans and examines their needs for compensation, health care, rehabilitation, outreach and other services. It may make recommendations for establishing programs to meet those specific needs.

The director of the Center for Minority Veterans, Charles W. Nesby, serves as the executive director for the committee. The center is responsible for ensuring that veterans programs are used by minorities.

Public Meeting Keeps Veterans Informed

The Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) met on March 12, 2002 at the Retsil Veterans Home. The meeting was a joint VAAC / Commander's Call meeting and was attended by approximately 90 residents, staff, veteran leaders and community members. Following presentations by NBBJ, the Architect and Engineering firm selected to design the new 240 bed facility, meeting participants had the opportunity to ask questions and offer input and suggestions. Because the project is considered "Fast Track" construction, there will be very little opportunity for design changes as the project moves forward. Community input and involvement are key at the beginning stages of this construction project.

The project is now in the formal design process, which will incorporate the input of WDVA, the architect & engineer and the construction manager. (The General Contractor / Construction Manager will likely be selected by mid-April.) Several important concepts were built into the Master Plan and are still the basis for many decisions currently being made.

Below are several of those core-concepts:

- Build the best skilled nursing facility for residents and staff.
- Create nursing unit "Neighborhoods" & "Town Center" support spaces.
- Develop a program based on resident centered care.
- Build universal rooms that allow "aging in place" and are adaptable to future needs.
- Balance the need for socialization with respect for privacy.



Construction planning meetings are held weekly at the NBBJ office in Seattle.

As part of site-preparation for the new buildings, several existing buildings on the Retsil campus will be demolished. While no skilled nursing residents will need to be moved to make way for demolition, it will require the relocation of some assisted living and domiciliary residents as well as administration, activities, pharmacy and possibly kitchen/dining staff.



Home residents, staff and VSO members look over the design of the new facility.

In addition to the skilled nursing facility, Retsil will continue to be the home of about 100 residents in assisted living units. An atmosphere promoting community living is very important, so maintaining the "Retsil Town Square" has been the topic of much discussion. The most recent design sketches highlight a new kitchen / multi-purpose building opposite the chapel. Not only will the building provide functional dining and activities space, it will also maintain the community atmosphere of the Retsil Veterans Home.

Orting Continuum of Care

Anticipating the changing demographics of veterans in Washington State, the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) has developed a plan to modify services currently offered at the Washington Veterans Homes. The Orting Soldiers Home will develop multi-dimensional services to begin addressing the needs of younger male and female veterans.

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Washington State
Dept of Veterans Affairs
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Governor
Gary Locke

WDVA Director
John M. King

Public Relations & Legislative Manager
Heidi Audette

Public Information Officer
Colleen Gilbert

Graphics Designer
Miriam Young

Call 1-877-VETS-R-US (877-838-7787) for an application to the veterans homes.



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Guest Editorial



By, Oria Berndt

Our country was attacked on 9/11 and again our military personnel are revered and respected. Old Glory is flying everywhere and patriotism is popular once again. Citizens are kinder to each other and the nation has been drawn together. Recent news of military casualties is spreading and many of us are praying. We see many images of soldiers – young men and women – bound for faraway places, all with the mission of protecting our freedom.

Who are these individuals saying goodbye to their spouses and children and heading off to such uncertainty, all willing to combat the forces of terror for the benefit of ordinary folks like you and I?

Let me tell you, these everyday heroes surround all of us. You know them: the colleague in your office; the retired nurse whose training was done on the battlefield; the man with the flag on his wheelchair; the father whose sleep is interrupted by never-ending battles in foreign fields. What happens to these brave men and women after they've taken care of us? Who takes care of them?

I am proud to say the State of Washington is stepping forward to care for its veterans, but am sad to say that not enough of our needy

Washington State Steps Forward To Care For Its Veterans

veterans are aware of the services available.

A little known part of our state government provides nursing home care to those who have served our country. Three State Veterans Homes provide several levels of care to Washington State's veterans who lack the means or family system to provide care.

In Western Washington, the Soldiers Home in Orting and the Veterans Home in Retsil (near Port Orchard) offer skilled nursing, assisted living and domiciliary care. Eastern Washington veterans are being served by a skilled nursing facility opened in September 2001. All three facilities accept Medicaid residents and provide various therapies, activities, veteran benefit services and all prescription drugs.

“What happens to these brave men and women after they’ve taken care of us?”

While the Western Washington Veterans Homes have been in existence for over 100 years, the facilities are in need of renovation. The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is implementing a Master Plan and has been awarded \$47 million to build a new nursing facility in Retsil. When

this is complete, sometime in 2005, the mission of the Orting Soldiers Home will begin to shift and will focus on more ambulatory veterans in need of a *hand-up* to get their lives back on track. **However, until construction is complete in 2005, the Orting Soldiers Home will continue to provide quality nursing home care to about 100 veterans.**

It's hard to go anywhere without hearing about the state's budget crisis, but the State Veterans Homes actually save money for Washington because the veterans homes qualify for federal reimbursement benefits not available to private nursing homes. The state's commitment to *Serve Those Who Served* goes a long way for our veterans and our state economy.

If you or a family member have ever served in the Armed Forces and are in need of long-term care, you can call the State Veterans Homes to get more information on eligibility requirements. The admissions team can often process referrals in 24 hours and can be reached at 1-877-VETS-R-US (1-877-838-7787). Or you can log on to www.dva.wa.gov for more information.

Thanks to Washington State, those who took care of our country and our many freedoms have not been forgotten.

Oria Berndt is the chairman of the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee, as well as the Non-Commissioned Officers Association's representative on the Veterans Legislative Coalition.

Governor’s Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee Members

Member	Department	Phone
Fran Agnes	American Ex-Prisoners Of War	425.742.5547
Oria Berndt-VAAC Chair	Non-Commissioned Officers Assoc.	253.535.5656
Brownie Braunsteiner	Veterans of Foreign Wars	253.475-4830
Res. Council Representative	Washington Veterans Home	360.895.4495
George Edmundson	Vietnam Veterans Of America	360.856.2023
Robert Harcum	Military Order Of The Purple Heart	509.248.9305
Frank Hensley	The Retired Officers Assoc.	360.943.0456
Charles Karczewski	Paralyzed Veterans Of America	425.774.2153
Dick Kirk	Member At Large	360.638.2823
Richard Marin	Member At Large	425.778.3762
Rupert Markham	Washington Soldiers Home	360.893.4539
Ray Miller	National Assoc. For Black Veterans	206.772.3386
Ronald Springer	American Merchant Marines	360.832.4339
Michele Vickery-Colpart	Disabled American Veterans	206.246.8953
Robert Westphal	American Legion	360.387.8352

The next VAAC meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2002, at the Orting Soldiers Home. For more information call 360-725-2153.

Partnership Provides Service Officer Training to Local Posts and Chapters

As resources and manpower become scarce, the role of volunteer service officers within posts and chapters takes on a new dimension.

Service Officer Training – a partnership formed between the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign War and WDVA – has been developed and implemented, utilizing the combined expertise of all the partners.

Under this new partnership, post and chapter volunteer service officers in communities across the state are learning to assist veterans with filing well-developed claims for benefits.

“The Volunteer Service Officer is the most important position in a post or chapter,” said Veterans of Foreign War’s state assistant service officer Cort Fraley.

Fraley, joined with American Legion’s Service Officer Sharon Williams and Disabled American Veteran’s Service Officer Larry Tolbert, are training local post and chapter service officers to go into their communities and take claims from local veterans.

“These forms represent someone’s life,” continued Fraley, at a recent training seminar held in Ellensburg, as he stressed the importance of the job of volunteer service officers.

“This program is allowing all service organizations to work together across the state,” said Williams. “No longer is one service organization forced to take on the burden of specific area alone.”

The following Service Officer Training sessions are scheduled:

April 11, 2002 – VFW Post 7952 in Richland;
May 23, 2002 – Spokane;
August 29, 2002 – Wenatchee.

To find out more about the Service Officer Training, contact:

Cort Fraley – 1-877-805-1331 or vfwcfral@vba.va.gov
Sharon Williams – 1-877-249-4386 or alswill@vba.va.gov
Larry Tolbert – 1-877-273-4606 or dvtolbl@vba.va.gov



(Above) African American PTSD Association members attending a WDVA informational meeting in Fife.
(Left) Volunteer service Officers assist local veterans with claims at a VIAF held the day after the Service Officer Training session in Ellensburg.

Public Meeting Continued from page 1

A Transitional Residence Program envisioned for the Soldiers Home will provide transitional living and rehabilitation for homeless veterans, including those with chemical dependency, post traumatic stress disorder and other mental health issues. The program structure developed for this population will be modeled after the federal Veterans Health Administration Domiciliary Care, which emphasizes case management, care coordination, sobriety/recovery, and employment (vocational rehabilitation). Domiciliary Care is a transitional living experience, which is time limited (6 months maximum length of stay) and goal oriented. At the end of six months veterans will be expected to:

- Obtain independent housing.
- Obtain employment and/or disability income.
- Sustain treatment for addictions and/or other mental health disorders.

Core services to be offered by the Transitional Residence Program will include: case management, care coordination, vocational rehabilitation, counseling, recovery groups, therapeutic settings, life skills training/education and social services.

The process for restructuring the programs at the Soldiers Home will be gradual and incremental, to be accomplished over a 3-5 year period. It is recognized that changing the resident mix, particularly at the Orting Soldiers Home will present some challenges. In order to begin the process of change, WDVA is developing a small pilot project for homeless women veterans at the Soldiers Home. The project will be designed as a smaller scale, transitional living program, which will serve as the basis for an expanded transitional residence program for male veterans over the next 3-5 years. Agency staff are currently developing a conceptual program, which may be ready for implementation in the fall 2002.

Communication among stakeholders and development of new community partnerships are essential for successful transition. Preliminary discussions with Puget Sound area homeless providers have reaffirmed the need for transitional housing programs, and support for the Soldiers Home plan. Above all, concern is being focused on the care and security of veterans currently served at the Veterans Homes, therefore the transition planning and implementation will be designed to minimize any adverse impact on current residents. Your comments regarding the WDVA plan are welcome. In addition, community providers are encouraged to become involved in the many partnerships forming to serve our veterans.

If you have questions regarding any of the above information, or on the Master Plan in general, please contact Heidi Audette at (360) 725-2154 or by e-mail at heidia@dva.wa.gov.

Information on the Master Plan, including the March 12 NBBJ presentation, is also available at www.dva.wa.gov by clicking on Master Plan.

Governor Locke Meets With The VAAC



On February 1, 2002, Governor Locke met with the VAAC. Each VAAC member had the opportunity to discuss issues important to their organization. The Governor thanked each member for their commitment to the veterans of Washington.



National Notes

VA Compensates More Veterans Exposed to Radiation

Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) Anthony J. Principi announced today the addition of five new cancers to the list of diseases presumed to be connected to the exposure of veterans to radiation during their military service. Veterans diagnosed with cancer of the bone, brain, colon, lung or ovary will have an easier time establishing entitlement to compensation for their illnesses beginning March 26, 2002.

The new rules apply to those veterans who participated in “radiation-risk activities” while on active duty, during active duty for training or inactive duty training as a member of a reserve component.

The definition of radiation-risk activities has also been expanded to include service at Amchitka Island, Alaska, prior to January 1, 1974, if a veteran was exposed while performing duties related to certain underground nuclear tests. The new definition also includes service at gaseous diffusion plants located in Paducah, Ky., Portsmouth, Ohio and an area known as K25 at Oak Ridge, Tenn. The previous definition was limited to service members who took part in the occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki or onsite at atmospheric nuclear weapons tests, or American POWs interred in Japan during World War II. People in these groups are frequently called “atomic veterans.”

In 1988, Congress established a presumption of service connection for 13 cancers in veterans exposed to “ionizing radiation,” with later changes bringing the number to 16.

VA’s changes ensure equity between veterans and federal civilians who may be entitled to compensation for these cancers caused by radiation under comparable federal laws such as the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) of 1990, as amended in 2000.

Veterans or their survivors can file claims for compensation by contacting a VA regional office at 1-800-827-1000 or visiting VA’s Website at www.va.gov.

Source – Federal VA News Release
January 25, 2002.

New Co-Pay Information

As a result of congressional action, the co-payment for a 30-day supply of a prescribed medication for a non-service connected condition will increase from \$2.00 to \$7.00, or \$21.00 for a 90-day supply beginning in February of 2002. Medication co-pays are only charged for prescriptions and over-the-counter medications furnished on an out patient basis. Co-payments are not charged for medical supplies such as diabetic supplies. Additionally, veterans receiving medications prescribed for service connected disabilities are not charged co-payments. Co-pay rates are the same for the mail-in pharmacy as if medications were picked up at the medical center.

There will now be a three-tier system that lowers the actual co-pay for primary and preventive care. Preventive screenings and immunizations, screenings for hepatitis C, breast cancer, cervical cancer laboratory, flat-film radiology services and EKG’s carry no co-pay. A primary care visit will cost \$15 and includes diagnosis and management of acute and chronic conditions, overall case management and the large majority of personal health needs.

Specialty care visits, care provided only through a referral from a primary care provider will carry a \$50 co-pay. Examples include day-surgery, computerized CAT scan, MRI’s, audiology and optometry care.

For more information on changes in co-payment information contact: the billing office at 1-800-329-8387, extension 6-2340 or visit the website at <http://www.va.gov/health/elig/financial.html>

Source – VA Puget Sound News – Winter 2001.



VA Launches Drug Safety Study for HIV Infected Veterans

Partnering with other government agencies and pharmaceutical companies, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is developing a national program to assess and ensure drug safety for veterans with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus).

The first step began with an interagency agreement recently signed by VA, which oversees health care for more than 20,000 veterans being treated for HIV, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Under the agreement, VA and FDA will conduct an epidemiological study to look at the adverse effects of drugs used to treat HIV infection.

The FDA will develop a web-based software program that allows VA’s clinicians to monitor certain drugs that may be linked to avascular necrosis (AVN), the destruction of bone cells caused by deficient blood supply. The project will evaluate veterans suspected of having AVN, who are registered with VA’s HIV Registry in Palo Alto, Calif., the world’s largest clinical database on HIV and AIDS. The registry contains data collected for 14 years on more than 50,000 veterans.

As the largest single provider of health care in the United States to persons with HIV, VA is in a unique position to partner with other organizations to monitor the pros and cons of these new and powerful drugs. VA intends to expand the program to include pharmaceutical companies in this field and to look at other areas of concern.

Source – Federal VA News Release
February 13, 2002.

VA Launches Four Hepatitis C Centers

In its continuing efforts to provide care to more than 80,000 veterans infected with hepatitis C, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on Jan. 1, 2002, funded four new centers to evaluate and improve hepatitis C screening, testing, clinical care and education.

“These new centers will enhance VA’s ability to respond to a large and growing public health problem,” said Dr. Frances Murphy, deputy under secretary for health. “They will spearhead efforts to improve care, educate veterans and health care professionals, and evaluate current programs. Ultimately, these efforts will benefit all Americans affected by hepatitis C.”

Each of the centers will receive annual funding of up to \$500,000 for five years, plus start-up costs. The centers are located at Minneapolis, San Francisco, West Haven, Conn., and Seattle, in conjunction with the Portland, Ore. VA medical center.

“VA screens, tests and treats more people with hepatitis C than anyone else in the country,” said Dr. Lawrence Deyton, director of the Public Health Strategic Health Care Group (PHSHG), which oversees VA’s hepatitis C program. “Even so, VA continues to explore new ways to improve its programs. These new centers will function as field-based clinical laboratories to evaluate current practices and develop new tools for improving the quality of care.”

The new centers build on the success of the previous Centers of Excellence in Hepatitis C program, established by VA in 1999. VA also regularly cooperates in many veteran outreach partnerships, conducts extensive research and sponsors educational conferences.

“VA has been and continues to be a leader in hepatitis C programs in the U.S.,” said Dr. Michael Rigsby, Director, HIV and Hepatitis C Programs, PHSHG. “In the past several years, VA has educated providers, including updating and distributing treatment guidelines and clinical protocols, hosting national symposiums, setting up a Web site with information for both clinicians and patients, holding a nationwide teleconference and launching a cooperative study involving 26 medical centers.”

“VA is in an extraordinary position to continue to lead the way in this rapidly changing area of health care and the new centers will play a critical role,” said Murphy.

To learn more about hepatitis C in VA, see <http://www.va.gov/hepatitisC>.

Source – Federal VA News Release January 17, 2002.

Law Increases Veterans' Burial Benefits

The Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001 increases the burial and funeral expense allowance for veterans who die as a result of a service-connected disability from \$1,500 to \$2,000 and the cemetery plot allowance, for certain other disabled veterans, from \$150 to \$300.

The law also directs VA to honor requests for government markers for veterans buried in private cemeteries even if their graves have headstones or markers furnished at private expense. Previous law prevented VA from providing markers in that situation. These increases are among many provisions of Public Law 107-103 that expand other veterans' benefits. This change applies to deaths on or after Dec. 1, 2001.

Source – Federal VA News Release February 11, 2002.

Charter Renewed for the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi has renewed the charter for a special 14-member panel that advises him on issues affecting women veterans.

"VA is being called upon to provide more services for women veterans," Principi said. "We must make a special effort to ensure we're meeting their needs for health care, rehabilitation, outreach and other VA programs."

The Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, established in 1984, reports annually to the VA secretary with assessments of the needs of women veterans. It also reviews the adequacy of VA programs to the needs of women veterans and makes recommendations for administrative and legislative changes.

The director of the Center for Women Veterans, Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris, serves as the executive director for the committee. VA's Center for Women Veterans, created in 1994, ensures that women veterans receive benefits and services on a par with male veterans; that they encounter no discrimination in their attempts to access these services; and that they are treated with respect, dignity and understanding.

The 14-member committee is among 21 special VA advisory panels. By law, the charters of those panels expire every two years unless renewed by the VA secretary for another two-year term. Principi renewed the charter for the women's panel on Dec. 31.

Source – Federal VA News Release February 1, 2002.

New CHAMPVA Regulations

Regulations that bring several improvements to the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) were recently published in the *Federal Register*.

One improvement, called "CHAMPVA for Life," actually began in October. It is designed for spouses or dependents who are 65 or older. They must be family members of veterans who have a permanent and total service-connected disability, who died of a service-connected condition or who were totally disabled from a service-connected condition at the time of death. They also must have Medicare coverage.

The regulation will also reduce the catastrophic cap, or amount of out-of-pocket expenses for CHAMPVA beneficiaries. Under the new rule, CHAMPVA will pay 100 percent of allowable medical expenses after a beneficiary reaches \$3,000 in out-of-pocket expenses, a reduction from \$7,500.

People can request an application by writing to the VA Health Administration Center (HAC), P.O. Box 469028, Denver, CO 80246-9028.

To be eligible for CHAMPVA, people must be family members of veterans who have a permanent and total service-connected disability, who died of a service-connected condition or who were totally disabled from a service-connected condition at the time of death.

Updates about CHAMPVA are posted on VA's Health Administration Center Web site at www.va.gov/hac.

Source – Federal VA News Release January 30, 2002.

Several bills of interest to veterans were passed during the 2002 Legislative Session. A brief summary of these bills is listed below. For more information on these or other bills, please contact Heidi Audette at heidia@dva.wa.gov or (360) 725-2154.

ESHB 2453 – Veterans' records

Exempts veteran discharge papers from public records disclosure provided that the veteran completes a form specifically requesting this exemption. Provides that military discharge papers filed after July 1, 2002 are exempt from public disclosure. Counties may charge a \$7 recording fee for veterans recording the form specifically requesting their previously filed records be exempt. Counties will maintain separate files for veterans discharge papers so the veteran or family member can obtain copies of the records.

SSB 5097 – POW/MIA flag

Every state agency, every state institution of higher education and every county, city, and town must display the national league of families POW/MIA flag along with the state and national flags upon or near its principal buildings on specific days. These days are Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day, and Veterans' Day.

ESB 5626 – Definition of veteran

Changes the definition of veteran, for some purposes, to include: (a) peacetime veterans and those who have fulfilled their initial military service obligation in any branch of the armed services and the National Guard and reserves; (b) those in the National Guard, reserves or Coast Guard who have been called into federal service by a presidential select reserve call up for at least 180 cumulative days; and (c) those who served in the Philippine Armed Forces or Scouts in World War II. The purposes to which this definition applies are for the veterans' preference on civil service exams; free license plates for 100% disabled veterans; county aid to indigent veterans; restrictions on sending veterans to alms houses; and county burials. The Higher Education Coordinating Board and Joint Committee on Pension Policy must study what would be the effect on their respective agencies of changing to the more inclusive definition of veteran.

SB 6375 – Retirement/veterans

For members of WSPRS and PERS 1 who receive full federal military retirement benefits, the prohibition on receiving state service credit based on that same period of military service is eliminated. This revised requirement conforms to the federal code.

For public pension purposes, the Vietnam Era is redefined as either (1) the period beginning August 5, 1964, and ending May 7, 1975, for all veterans or (2) the period beginning February 28, 1961, and ending May 7, 1975, for those veterans serving in the Republic of Vietnam during that period. This revised definition conforms to the federal statute.

SB 6430 – WWII veterans

Local school districts may issue high school diplomas to honorably discharged World War II veterans who left high school before graduation in order to serve in the War. The Superintendent of Public Instruction must specify the evidence requirements necessary to prove eligibility for the diploma.

Paralyzed Veterans of America ...Continuing to Serve



Nationally....

Founded in 1946, the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) is a nonprofit organization chartered by the United States Congress. PVA is dedicated to serving the needs of its members – all of whom have catastrophic paralysis caused by spinal cord injury (SCI) or spinal cord disease (SCD), such as Multiple Sclerosis.

Nationwide, PVA has served its members – veterans of the armed forces who have experienced spinal cord injury or disease – for over 50 years, by developing a unique expertise in a wide variety of issues involving the special needs of its members. Their efforts have allowed them to become a leading advocate for quality health care for its members, as well as participate in research and education that addresses spinal cord dysfunction and disease. In addition, PVA assists members in receiving benefits available to them as a result of their military service, and advocates for civil rights and opportunities maximizing the independence of members and all individuals with disabilities. www.pva.org

Karczewski represents PVA on the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee as well as being nominated to serve on the Construction Team for the new 240-bed facility to be built at Retsil.

By monitoring local VA hospitals, PVA members help ensure all SCI and SCD veterans receive high-quality health care, and assist them in obtaining benefits they earned by serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. In addition, their funding assistance allows nurses at the VA hospital to receive additional training to maintain their rehabilitation certifications.

The Seattle VA Spinal Cord Injury Department was recently named by the USDVA as one of the seven best units in the nation, when they received the Clinical Program of Excellence.

"Dr. Margaret Hammons is an excellent Chief of the Department," said Michaels. "She and Chief Nurse Elaine Detwiller are to be commended."

In addition to health care issues, NWPVA has spent considerable time and effort in promoting sports and recreation for its members.

"Members can participate in the National Wheelchair Games, the Bellingham "Ski to Sea", trap shooting, archery, fly fishing, bowling and May 4, we'll be having the Blazing Paddles table tennis tournament," said Michaels.

"By volunteering, they can also earn their way to events," said Pearson.

NWPVA plans to send 30 members to the National Wheelchair Games in Cleveland, Ohio this July.

For more information about NWPVA, call 1-800-336-9782 or e-mail Jack Michaels at JackMich44@hotmail.com or pvachnw@mindspring.com.

PVA National Service Officers stand ready to answer your questions



National PVA service officer Mike Killen (L) and Craig Stewart, Sr. Benefits Advocate.

Senior Benefits Advocate Craig Stewart and National Service Officer Mike Killen spend their days advising veterans on federal and state programs, including: claims, compensation, aide and attendance, adaptive equipment, auto grants, housebound benefits, nonservice-connected pension, educational benefits, government insurance and home loans. In addition, they stand ready to answer questions

regarding beneficiary travel, fee-basis care, nursing home care, home health care, VA outpatient care and hospital care.

Stewart, an ex-Marine who served in Vietnam, has spent 22 years with the PVA as a National Service Officer, and the last five years leading Seattle's PVA claims office. Although the majority of their work is done by phone, Stewart spends 2-3 days per week doing outreach at the Seattle VA hospital. In the future he plans to expand their outreach network and work more closely with the VA hospitals in Walla Walla and Vancouver.

Killen, also an ex-Marine, has been a National Service Officer for the last six years.

The PVA Seattle office filed 567 claims during the last fiscal year, with 424 of the claims being for Spinal Cord Injuries (SCI) or Spinal Cord disease (SCD), such as MS or ALS.

"We handle all claims for all veterans," said Killen, "but, spinal cord injury and spinal cord disease bring an additional need for a network of knowledgeable professionals working together to provide for these veterans."

Stewart and Killen can be reached at 1-800-795-3576 and are located at 915 Second Ave., Room 1062 of the Federal Building in Seattle.

Locally....

The Northwest Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (NWPVA) was chartered May 23, 1977, and for 25 years has committed to helping veterans

with SCI or SCD live their lives to the fullest.

A misconception about PVA is that only veterans with service connected spinal cord injuries are eligible for membership in the NWPVA – which has no annual dues.

In reality, more than 54 per cent of NWPVA's members are non-service connected, meaning they acquired their SCI or SCD after being discharged from the service.

Founding member and Executive Director, Jack Michaels, National Director Chuck Karczewski and Chapter President Gary Pearson, can look back over the history of NWPVA and remember the successes of their efforts. In 1977, Michaels and Karczewski were proponents for obtaining accessible lifts on inter-city transit buses in downtown Seattle and Tacoma.

Today, their 380 members continue to advocate for veterans.



(Left to Right) Gary Pearson, Jack Michaels and Chuck Karczewski.

Blazing Paddles Table Tennis Tournament



The Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America (NWPVA) will host the 6th Annual Blazing Paddles Wheelchair Table Tennis tournament on Saturday May 4th, 2002 beginning at 12:00 noon. The tournament is held the Chapter Office, 616 SW 152nd, Burien, WA.

Anyone who plays table tennis in a wheelchair is invited to participate. Competition is in two classes, an open class and the rating system used for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. The event is free and open to all wheelchair users. Call the NWPVA office, 1-800-336-9782 to register.



Military Order of the Purple Heart Establishing New Centralia/Chehalis Chapter

The ORDER of the PURPLE HEART for MILITARY MERIT, commonly called “The Purple Heart,” is an American decoration – the oldest military decoration in present use and the first award made available to a common soldier. It was created by one of the world’s most famed and best-loved heroes – General George Washington.

The ORDER of the PURPLE HEART is awarded to members of the U.S. armed forces who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy and posthumously to the next of kin in the name of those who are killed in action or die of wounds received in action. It is definitely a combat decoration.

An organization now known as the “Military Order of the Purple Heart,” (MOPH) was formed in 1932 for the protection and mutual interest of all who have received the decoration. Composed exclusively of Purple Heart recipients, it is the only strictly “combat” organization in existence.

Funds for welfare, rehabilitation and/or service work carried on by the organization are derived almost entirely from the annual distribution of its official flower, The Purple Heart Viola. These are assembled by disabled and needy veterans, many of whom receive little or no compensation from other sources.

Close relatives of Purple Heart recipients are eligible to belong to the Ladies Auxiliary of the MOPH, which does important work nationally and locally in Veterans’ Hospitals.



Paralyzed Veterans of America Awareness Week



Proclamation

WHEREAS, thousands of our citizens have served as members of the Armed Forces, and in doing so honored our nation with exemplary dedication; and

WHEREAS, Paralyzed Veterans of America, a veterans service organization chartered by Congress, has for more than 50 years served the needs of its members, all of whom have catastrophic paralysis caused by spinal cord injury or disease; and

WHEREAS, Northwest Paralyzed Veterans of America has served these veterans residing in Washington State since May 23, 1977; and

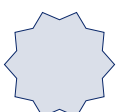
WHEREAS, it is important to recognize the sacrifices made by our state’s veterans who are paralyzed;

NOW THEREFORE, I, Gary Locke, Governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim April 14th through April 20, 2002, as

Paralyzed Veterans of America Awareness Week

in Washington State, and I urge all citizens to join me in this special observance.

Signed on this 5th day of March, 2002



Gary Locke
Governor Gary Locke



Duane Hughes, Regional Field Supervisor, processes claims at the MOPH office in the Federal Building in Seattle.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart became a Congressionally chartered national veterans service organization on August 26, 1958. Members provide veterans services, rehabilitation and educational programs – to all veterans – with funding from the Military Order of the Purple Heart Service Foundation, Inc.

Nationally...

MOPH funds a National Appeals office in Washington, D.C., as well as a United States Court of Appeals for veterans claims. In addition, perpetual scholarships have been established in 30 colleges/ universities and tuition assistance is awarded annually to sons and daughters of Purple Heart recipients.

Locally...

The state’s 430 members are involved in ROTC Leadership awards presented each spring to outstanding cadets at three Universities and 17 high schools; financial support of patients at the VA hospitals; installation of a granite Purple Heart Memorial at the Tahoma National Cemetery; and support of MOPH’s National Service Officer, Duane Hughes, in Seattle.

Hughes, the Regional Field Supervisor for six states, processed 380 claims for Washington last year. In addition, three MOPH volunteers have been situated on-site at two of the state’s VA hospitals, to assist veterans and patients with claims. Beginning Feb. 1 of this year, Frosty Hulsey and Terry Newley spend every Monday at the Seattle VA hospital, and Ben Giddings is at the Spokane VA hospital.

MOPH has three active chapters in Washington and one auxiliary. According to Washington’s Department Commander Jim Sims, a new chapter is being established in the Centralia-Chehalis area.

To contact the MOPH:

National Service Officer Duane Hughes	206.220.6230
Service Officers Frosty Hulsey/Terry Newley	206.768.5359
Service Officer Ben Giddings	208.765.3526
Dept. Commander Jim Sims	360.807.8272
Ladies Aux. Lois Franz - Centralia	360.807.8272
Ladies Aux. Lin Jeffrey - Lakewood	253.538.3478

Washington State Veterans Homes

Street Talk



With the Spokane Veterans Home Residents
What is the most Irish thing you've ever done?



"Being born Irish, I've drunk a few beers."
--Jack Bardsley



"I've watched the St Patrick's day parade on TV and made shamrock shaped cookies."
--Myrna Biegert



"I learned some Irish songs from my music instructor. I played the violin."
--Don McCormick



"I stuck up for my Irish ancestors by drinking beer and whiskey."
--Charlie Pierce



"I've put on green hats and wore pins that say "Kiss me I'm Irish", when I played bass guitar in my own band. I played for 50 years, I played almost every St Patrick's day. I've played and sung many Irish tunes."
--Don McCullough

Serving Veterans and Their Families

The Spokane Veterans Home staff received a beautiful thank you note that *really* reminds us of the differences we can make not only in the lives of the residents but also in the lives of their families.

To the Staff:

Thank you for being a part of my father's life. You have all become, in my eyes, his sons and daughters.

I know my Dad as a man you have never met. A man with a witty tongue, always a smile, wonderful stories, a real gift of gab. A man who gave unselfishly to his children and wife.

You know my Dad as a man I have never met. One who gets agitated, rambles non-sensibly, incontinent, and unable to care for himself. A man you see everyday. A man I cannot bear to see.

You have adopted my Dad into your hearts, when his condition leaves a hole in mine. The man I have looked up to, stood beside and now look down on in his bed makes me wonder why God would want this. It seems so unfair!! He always said "just take me out behind the barn and shoot me if I ever go to a nursing home." Here he is, in the one place he never wanted to be. Not because it's a nursing home, but because he never wanted to be a burden to us. He didn't want us to fuss over him. "You all have your life to live, don't waste it coming down to stare at me."

I stare, and I cry. I justify why I don't need to come and see him. I'm too busy, too tired after work, the roads are too slick. The real truth is I lost the Dad I remember, you found the Dad I lost. . .

Thank you all for being a part of his life. Taking over from where I left off. He has been blessed to have found you.

Roy Lange
Lt. Verne W. Lange's son

Volunteer For Veterans

Donations of all kinds are gladly accepted at the Veterans Homes. But, have you considered what a wonderful donation your time would make?

If you'd like to share a bit of yourself with our veterans, please contact the Volunteer Program Coordinators at the State Veterans Homes.

You'll be glad you did!

Washington Veterans Home –

Catherine Shaw – 1-360-895-4376

Washington Soldiers Home and Colony –

Lynn Zemke – 1-360-893-4511

Spokane Veterans Home –

Shane Price – 1-509-344-5788

Donation Ideas

- Small TV/VCR combos
- Personal care items
- Socks and under clothes
- Stationary/greeting cards
- New or good used clothing in warm fabrics
- Current magazines, books and board games
- Lap Robes

Please call the Spokane Veterans Home before delivering donations (1-509-344-5788).

Washington State Veterans Homes

Tech Students Stage Supper Club

On February 25th a group of students from West Sound Technical School, a vocational program in Kitsap County, volunteered to prepare and serve a supper club meal for 25 residents at the Veterans Home.

Under the instruction of Gary Fuller, the students raised the funds to pay for the meal. They served Chicken Coeur D'en Bleu, steamed red potatoes and carrot flowerets. The entree was followed by ice cream sundaes.

The event was made more exciting through the participation of the 'Bits-n-Pieces' 4H group who came in before the dinner to decorate the activities room with a 50's theme. There were old record albums on all the walls, including the elevator. Throughout the day and prior to the meal, residents and staff enjoyed reading the old album labels and reminiscing about 'the Good old Days'.

During the dinner, the 4H group helped serve, and afterwards entertained the residents by singing and playing the piano!

"The energy and enthusiasm of these young people was contagious everyone had fun. Even an off-key song, sung with a joyful heart can bring joy to our residents," said Tami Reuter, Recreation Specialist.



Area students and residents share a meal and make lasting memories.

Welcome Home USS Carl Vinson



(Left) Residents and staff at the Veterans Home didn't let the cold and wet weather on January 23 keep them from greeting the crew of the USS Carl Vinson as it pulled into port at the Puget Sound Navy Shipyard, just across the bay.

Orting Soldiers Home



Orting's Bell Choir and Music Therapy Assist With Maintaining Quality Of Life

Twice a week, residents at WSH come together with Music Therapist Barbara Stone to express themselves through musical activities, including playing in the bell choir.

According to the American Music Therapy Association, using music as a healing influence to affect health and behavior is as old as the writings of Aristotle and Plato.

During WWI and WWII, community musicians of all types went to Veterans hospitals around the country to play for the thousands of veterans suffering both physical and emotional trauma from the wars. The patients' notable physical and emotional responses to music led the doctors and nurses to request the hiring of musicians by the hospitals.

The first music therapy degree program in the world, founded at Michigan State University in 1944, celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1994.

"Where words fail, music speaks."
—Hans Christian Andersen



Music Therapist Barbara Stone conducts bell choir sessions twice a week at the Soldiers Home in Orting.



Washington Veterans Homes "Serving Those Who Served"

Are you or a loved one looking for long-term care?

If you have served in the Armed Forces, you ARE a veteran and could be eligible for care in a Veterans Home.



The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs operates three Veterans Homes providing 24-hour nursing, assisted living or rehabilitation services. The Homes are located in Orting, Port Orchard and Spokane (Spokane: 24-hr. nursing only).

Call 1-877-VETS-R-US (877-838-7787) for more information, or visit our web site at www.dva.wa.gov

Red Cross Partnering with WDVA

By Cecilia Stevens, AFES Coordinator

The Whatcom County American Red Cross is working hard to create a network of services for veterans in the community.

Cecilia Stevens, Whatcom County American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services (AFES) Coordinator recently met with Gerald Pfannenstiel, the new Veterans Community Services Coordinator with the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs. The goals for each agency are similar; to provide better outreach to local veterans by creating a strong network of connected individuals and community services. Pfannenstiel works with a five county area, while Stevens focuses her outreach toward the 15,000 local veterans that live in Whatcom County.

Many veterans remain unaware that they are eligible for a number of services. When an emergency occurs, they often do not know where to go for assistance. Even if a veteran is ineligible for specific Veterans Services, the person can often be referred to other community services. Some benefits that veterans may be eligible for include disability compensation, pension, home loan guaranty, life insurance, education, vocational training for disabled veterans, burial allowance, survivor's compensation, and pension.

One of the main services the American Red Cross provides veterans is assistance and information about Disabled Veterans Assistance benefits. The Red Cross also helps develop and prepare applicants' claims and obtain sufficient evidence to support them. In the past to meet this need, the Whatcom County Chapter has primarily provided veterans with information and referrals to other Red Cross Veterans Services offices in Washington State. Yet a larger pool of Chapter



(Left to right) Laura Witter, Gerald Pfannenstiel, Cecilia Stevens, and Susanne Harlandt look over the services available for veterans.

volunteers is currently being recruited and trained, so these new Service Officers will be able to provide direct Disabled Veterans Assistance from the Whatcom County Red Cross.

The Whatcom County Red Cross can also provide veterans with information regarding needed local community services for which they are qualified. Help may include local food banks, churches, Department of Social and Health Services, low-income housing and other important services. The Whatcom County Red Cross looks forward to working with the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs to share valuable information about the local network of available services.

Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services are considered "must" services mandated by Congress. These services, which include "around the clock, around the world" emergency communications for active duty military members and their families, have taken local priority status since September 11 with the call up of many Reserve and National Guard units in Washington State and all over the country.

The Red Cross Board of Governors has determined that service to veterans is an appropriate extension of related services given to active members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families. The Whatcom County Chapter is extremely grateful for working partnership opportunities such as the connection with the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs. These working relationships serve to increase the availability of Red Cross services to veterans in Whatcom County.

It is an important part of the mission and goals of the Whatcom County Red Cross to increase service to local veterans. Time, attention, and committed, trained volunteers will increase the ability for the local Red Cross to serve veterans in a capable and efficient manner.

Veterans Assistance and Information Fair Schedule

(Revised from the Dec. 2001 Veteran Voices)

Port Angeles
Fri, Apr 12 - 11AM-6PM
The Armory Mall
228 W. 1st St

Pasco
Fri, Apr 26 - 10AM-5PM
National Guard Armory
127 W. Clark St.

Oak Harbor
Sat, Apr 27 - 10AM-5PM
Senior Center
51 SE Jerome St.

Westport
Fri, May 3 - 11AM-6PM
VFW Post #3057
211 E. Pacific

Wenatchee
Sat, May 4 - 9AM-4PM
Vet Center
215 Okanogan Ave

Walla Walla
Sat, May 11 - 9AM-4PM
Walla Walla County
Fairgrounds

Everett
Sat, May 25 - 10AM-5PM
National Guard Armory
2730 Oakes Ave

Belfair
Fri, Jun 7 - 1PM-6PM
Theler Community Center
22871 NE State Hwy 3

Olympia
Sat, Jun 15 8AM-8PM
Evergreen State College
2700 Evergreen Parkway NW

Veterans Remembrance Emblem Fund Dispersed

Nine projects paying tribute to living and deceased veterans in Washington State have received funding from the Veterans Remembrance Emblem Fund administered by The Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC).

The following groups were approved for funding, which totaled \$29,425:

♦ **American Legion Post 66 in Edmonds - \$1,424** to be used for enhancing the veterans monument located next to the South Snohomish County Historical Museum;

♦ **NW Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America - \$3,500** for the purpose of repairing and repainting the Veterans Chimes Tower at Evergreen Washelli Veterans Cemetery in Seattle;

♦ **Sunrise Rotary Club of Silverdale - \$3,500** to help build a Veterans Memorial in Silverdale;

♦ **Puyallup Heritage Art Foundation - \$3,500** to help with the building of a War Memorial at Grayland Park in Puyallup;

♦ **Jesse L. Colley American Legion Post 195 - \$3,500** to assist with the construction of a Veterans Memorial at Mountainview Cemetery in Connell;

♦ **Lakewood Veterans Memorial Committee - \$3,500** to be used towards the building of a Veterans Memorial at the new City Hall in Lakewood;

♦ **Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 11326 in Cheney - \$3,500** to repair and upgrade the Cheney City Park Veterans Memorial built in 1924;

♦ **Island Art for Veterans - \$3,500** to help with building of a Veterans Memorial Plaza at the Law and Justice building in Coupeville;

♦ **Benaroya Hall - \$3,500** to assist with replacing a wall panel and adding names of veterans killed in action.

The Emblem Fund permits eligible veterans to purchase and display approved decals on their vehicle license plates through the Department of Licensing, with net fees being deposited in a special account held by the state treasurer.

RCW 46.16.332 allows disbursement of these funds by the VAAC, for direct costs of contracting, contract administration and project administration related to: projects that pay tribute to living and deceased veterans; upkeep and operations of existing memorials and; land acquisition and construction of new memorials.

The VAAC – under the leadership of Chair Oria Berndt – is composed of 17 members and advises the governor and the director of the Department of Veterans Affairs on issues and programs concerning veterans. www.dva.wa.gov

In The Spotlight

“Serving Those Who Have Served” takes on new meaning when the service provider and recipient share a similar background. At the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, the number of employees who are veterans ranks high, providing a personal connection with clients not always achieved in other agencies.

In an effort to introduce these dedicated employees, WDVA will highlight a different veteran/employee each issue.

MSGT Mike Regan, (USAF-ret), a Veterans Benefits Specialist at the Spokane Veterans Home, joined the WDVA team Nov. 5, 2001.

Originally from Portland, OR., Regan enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1970, where he spent the next 22 years performing a variety of duties.

His military career began as a member of the Patrol Detector Dogs Security, and was assigned to the Narcotics unit in Southeast Asia. After five years, he transferred to the Veterinary Technician area, where for the next eight years he was cross-trained in the Public Health Section.

Budget cuts and changing military priorities provided the opportunity to spend his next seven years of service flying on B-52s as a Gunnery Sgt. and instructor. Policy changes once again provided a turn in his career, and he spent his last three years as an Educational Benefits Counselor in the Educational Center at Fairchild AFB in Spokane.

After retiring from the military, Regan attended Gonzaga University in Spokane, graduating with a BA in Human Services in 1994. While at Gonzaga, he spent his free time as the colleges' Veterans Representative, assisting veterans with educational benefits.

From graduation until joining WDVA, Regan worked on government security projects at Fairchild AFB. Although his work was interesting, Regan said he was still looking for an opportunity to find a career where he could gain self-satisfaction.



Mike Regan enjoying a holiday gathering with residents at Spokane Veterans Home.

helping veterans and their families.

“This is a really nice home, and we have such unique cases,” said Regan. “It is a really difficult time for the family to move a loved one into a nursing home and to be able to ease the burden for them has been really great.”

Besides his responsibilities as a VBS, Regan has also accepted the challenge of being the chairman of the Home's marketing team.

“There are not enough hours in the day to accomplish everything I want to get done,” said Regan. Besides joining the VFW, he also has become involved in the Veterans Task Force, all in an effort to get exposure to veterans in the community and to help increase residency at the Home.

In addition to his commitments to his country, veterans and WDVA, Regan and his wife, Elizabeth, have successfully raised seven children and are enjoying the role of grandparents to their four grandchildren.



MSGT Mike Regan

That opportunity came as he was checking the WDVA website – www.dva.wa.gov, and saw a job announcement for the VBS position at the Spokane Veterans Home.

“I read the announcement,” said Regan, “and knew they were talking about me!”

As the VBS at the Home, Regan says his duties have brought him the personal satisfaction of

SDIT Retrace Fathers Footsteps in Vietnam

“They Were Our Fathers”

Sons and Daughters In Touch (SDIT), the national organization representing children of American servicemen lost during the Vietnam War, will take its members to Vietnam to retrace the final footsteps their fathers left a generation ago. Scheduled for the spring of 2003, the trip will include visits to many of the sites that played significant roles in the war: Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Bien Hoa, Hue, Da Nang, China Beach, the DMZ, the central highlands, and Hanoi.

“I can't think of a better time for SDIT and its members to visit Vietnam. For ten years, this organization has helped its members confront their loss and realize that they are not alone in that struggle. Now we have the chance to help them touch, see and feel the land where their fathers died,” said SDIT founder Tony Cordero, son of Air Force Major Bill Cordero (KIA 1965).

SDIT anticipates that as many as 200 of its members will make the two-week trip, making it the largest visit of its kind to the country where America fought its longest war. Interested veterans and other family members will only add to the size of the travel group. With so many SDIT members hoping to visit the actual site where their fathers died, travel planners will arrange for smaller groups to make side visits to these remote battlefields and villages. To offset many of the planning costs, and to make the trip affordable for its members, SDIT will launch a fund-raising campaign to generate up to \$500,000. The group will look to supportive veterans organizations, corporations, and other individuals for assistance in reaching this goal.

“Two years ago, I was able to visit Vietnam and to make personal contact with my dad. I couldn't have done it without the help of some very supportive Vietnam veterans,” said Michelle Baugh, of Centralia, IL, daughter of Army SP4 Richard Githens (KIA 1968). With the tremendous support of America's veterans, SDIT has hosted four major Fathers' Day ceremonies at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC.

For many of the attendees, those events provided the initial opportunity to see their father's name inscribed on the memorial and to meet others who lost their father during the Vietnam War.

Interested participants and contributors can complete information forms at the SDIT web site: www.sdit.org or can call 800-984-9994. Sons and Daughters In Touch is a fully accredited non-profit 501(c)3 organization that has been meeting the needs of its members since 1990. SDIT members are the children of men who served at nearly every rank — in every branch — of the US military. Today, these children are testaments to the sacrifice of their fathers. They have become parents, priests, professional athletes, business-professionals and more.

Jill Hubbs

Director, Educational Services & Outreach
WSRE Public Television
1000 College Boulevard
Pensacola, Florida 32504

Telephone: (850)484-1236
Fax: (850)484-1255
jill_hubbs@wsre.pbs.org

2002 Veterans Service Organizations Annual Washington State Conventions

EX-POWS

May 15-16 – Yakima
Maurice Sharp, Commander
(253) 565-0444

AMVETS

June 15 – Ellensburg
Ellensburg Inn
1722 Canyon Rd.
Ron Smith, Commander
(360) 876-5030

DAV

June 5-8 – Spokane
West Coast Inn at the Park
Harold Wiley, Commander
(509) 246-0395

VFW

June 13-15 – Spokane
West Coast Inn at the Park
Richard Keeton, Adjutant - (253) 922-2114

MOPH

June 14-15 – Lakewood
James Sims, Commander
(360) 432-8195

VVA

3rd Week in June
Jimmy Grissom, Commander
(509) 750-0520

AMERICAN LEGION

July 12-13 – Olympia
Westcoast Hotel
2300 Evergreen Park Dr.
Dale Davis, Adjutant
(360) 491-4373

**HATS
OFF!**

NCOA Donates Funds Enhancing Homes' Programs

The National Non-Commissioned Officers Association recently presented Retsil and Orting with checks (totaling almost \$10,000.00) to purchase new equipment identified to enhance the facilities quality of care for residents.

At the Washington Veterans Home, a motorized screen and projector for the auditorium will be purchased. The 6'6" by 11'6" screen will be ceiling mounted and used for movie matinees and to augment BINGO, for those residents with vision difficulties. In addition, it will eliminate the need to rent the equipment for special events such as Memorial Day and Veterans Day programs.



NCOA Rep. Oria Berndt (left) presents checks to the Superintendents and VAAC Rep. for each home, along with Director John King.

At the Washington Soldiers Home, a special cart, called a Snoezelen A la Carte, has been chosen. The Snoezelen program engages all five senses at once, and can be used to either provide sensory stimulation or destimulation and relaxation. Staff at Orting have already identified many uses for the cart, with Nursing using it at night to comfort residents, and Social Services, Therapy and Recreation staff already lining up beneficial uses for daytime activities.

WDVA is grateful for the patronage of NCOA, both past and present, and for the ability to enhance the lives of our residents with their gift.



High Blood Pressure Meds Reduce PTSD Nightmares

By Murray Raskind, M.D.

Trauma nightmares are common and often persistent problems for traumatized veterans with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). We have discovered that a long available medication used to treat high blood pressure and prostate enlargement, is very effective for reducing trauma nightmare frequency and intensity, while improving sleep.

This medication called prazosin, blocks excess adrenaline activity in the brain at night. Hundreds of veterans at VA Puget Sound have been treated safely and effectively with prazosin for periods up to four years so far. The medication is inexpensive, but requires a prescription and an evaluation by your health care provider before use. If your provider has questions about prazosin for PTSD nightmares, please have him or her contact Murray Raskind, M.D., Director, Mental Health Service, VA Puget Sound at 206-768-5375 or murray.raskind@med.va.gov.

Recycling the Veteran Voices

As a *Veteran Voices* recipient, I wish to express an idea about recycling this newsletter. I was about to throw out my past issues of the *Veteran Voices* when an idea came to me. Being an education buff, I thought: What a way to educate the public about WA State veteran issues if each recipient took his or her newsletter to a doctor or dentist office, an eye clinic, nursing home, or library.

--A Voices Reader

★ Calendar of Events ★

- ★ **Congressional Medal of Honor Day** - March 25, 2002
www.defenselink.mil/faq/pis/14.html
- ★ **Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day** - April 9, 2002
- ★ **The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic**
April 6-12, 2002 www.va.gov/vetevent/wsc/2002/default.asp
- ★ **Paralyzed Veterans of America Awareness Week**
April 14-20, 2002 www.pva.org
- ★ **National Volunteer Week** - April 21-27, 2002
"Celebrate the American Spirit – VOLUNTEER!"
www.pointsoflight.org/programs/programs_nvwintroa.htm
- ★ **National Nurses Week** - May 6-12, 2002
"Nurses Care for America" www.nursingworld.org/pressrel/nnw
- ★ **Blazing Paddles Table Tennis Tournament**
May 4, 2002 12:00 noon. (See page 6 for more information)
- ★ **Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee/Commanders Call Meeting**
May 14, 2002 - 9:30 a.m. - Orting Soldiers Home
- ★ **Tahoma National Cemetery Military service** for individuals interned the previous month without a funeral service - May 11
POC: Bernie Moskiwitz 206.772.6285
- ★ **Memorial Day Concert** - May 26, 2002 - 8:00 - 9:30 p.m. ET
National Symphony Orchestra
PBS Stations www.pbs.org/memorialdayconcert
- ★ **Memorial Day Observed** - May 27, 2002
WA Veterans Home Program (Retsil) - 9:00 a.m. Open to the public
WA Soldiers Home Program (Orting) - 2:00 p.m. Open to the public
Watch our web site for information on these and other Memorial Day programs throughout the state. www.dva.wa.gov/events